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Self-esteem in Iranian university students and its relationship with academic achievement

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Abstract

This research aims to study self-esteem and its determined link to academic achievement of university students. According the results obtained from a study on 370 students, significant difference is observed in self-esteem among male and female students. However, male students for family self-esteem received higher scores than female students ($t = -2/12$, $p < 0.05$). The students of the faculties of basic sciences, psychology and educational sciences, and electro- computer showed significant difference in self-esteem. Academic self-esteem and family self-esteem on the meaningful level of $P < 0.05$ had a direct and positive relationship with the academic achievement of students.

Keywords: Self-esteem, Family self-esteem, Academic self-esteem, Body self-esteem, Academic achievement;

1. Introduction

Self-esteem has long been considered an essential component of good mental health and has drawn many researchers' attention in recent years. Self-esteem is composed of person's self Assessment and a combination of his/her self- concept of characteristics and abilities. (Pope and McHales,. 1988. Flouri et al., 2006 & Osborn, 1997).

Our self-esteem develops and evolves throughout our lives as we build an image of ourselves through our experiences with different people and activities. Experiences during our childhood play a particular large role in the shaping of our basic self-esteem. When we were growing up our successes (and failures) and how we were treated by the members of our immediate family, by our teachers, coaches, religious authorities, and by our peers, all contributed to the creation of our basic self-esteem(Yaratan and Yucesoylu, 2010). According to Cooper Smith's studies more than 30 years ago, persons who feel insufficiency and worthless, assume themselves as to be unimportant and unable to produce internal sources for improving their situation. These people believe that they are unsuccessful and unhelpful while they don't achieve their goals despite a lot of effort to improve the situation and this belief is as a result of poor self-esteem (Daglas, 2006).

As far as Pop, Mchale and Craighead are concerned self-esteem is composed of 5 domains including social, academic, family, body and global scales. The present research has focused on surveying student's self-esteem based on these 5 domains. Since student's self-esteem plays an important role in producing self-belief and capability

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to think, research, scientific production and educational achievement, it's essential to step forward to evaluate and increase this psychological component.

When studying and comparing self-esteem in the students of three faculties of basic sciences, psychology and educational sciences and electro- computer of Tehran's Shahid Beheshti University, the research aimed to answer the following questions:

Is there a discrepancy between self-esteem of male and female students?

Is there a meaningful difference between self-esteem of students of different faculties?

Is there a meaningful relationship between self-esteem and educational achievement of students?

2. Methods

The present research is a typically analytic and descriptive one. In this research, firstly, after Tehran's Shahid Beheshti University has been randomly picked out of other Tehran's great universities, a number of three faculties have been picked in random, cluster and class types. Then, they were handed questionnaires to fill. Finally, questionnaires data, demographic information and the averages of one semester past have been used for analysis.

2.1. Universe and sample

Out of 10901 students of Shahid Beheshti University students, some 370 male and female students, cases required for research, from the subject faculties have been recognized to fit the research based on Morgan and Krejcie table (1970). Random selection is made with the samples taken in several phases and classes. From among this number of students, 38.1% male (n=141) and 61.9% female (n=229) students were picked (table 1).

Table 1- Demographic features of the participants

Gender \ Faculty	psychology and educational	sciences	computer and power	Total	Age (Mean)	Percent
Male	30	36	75	141	20-23	38/1%
Female	69	116	44	229	20-23	61/9%
Total	99	152	119	370	20-23	100%

2.2. Measures

2.2.1. The Five Scale Test of Self-Esteem (SET)

Self-esteem was appraised using Pope's test of self-esteem. The test consists of 60 questions and evaluates self-esteem domains: global, academic, body, family and social scale. Cronbach's alpha coefficient was used to measure internal-consistency in a local study in Iran. In that study, validity and reliability data for the (SET) were appraised by internal-consistency and factor analysis methods. Obtained results revealed that alpha coefficient is equal to 0.89 for the whole sample.

2.2.2. Educational progress report of students

For studying the average, the past semester progress report of students has been used.

2.2.3. Data analysis

Data collection tools are applied to the student in the class hours, in analysis of data one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA), t and Post-Hoc and regression analysis are applied. In the analysis of the data spss 12 packs was used.

3. Results

One-way variance analysis has been applied in order to check the differential between students' self-esteem in different faculties. The results showed that zero hypothesis is rejected and research hypothesis is approved because $F=4.60$ at the meaningful level of $P<0.05$ becomes sensible. In other words, there exists a sensible difference between self-esteem of students in different faculties (table 2).

Table 2. One-way variance analysis of differential between the self-esteem in different faculties

Source	SS	df	MS	F	Sig.
Between-group	2048.62	2	1024.31	4.60	0.011
Within-group	81642.63	367	222.46		
Total	83691.29	369			

With the above difference being specified, a meaningful difference is seen when comparing the average scores of psychology with those of power and computer faculty at the level of $P<0.05$. This is done to show the differential level through Post-Hoc Analysis and table 3 data. Average scores of psychology and educational sciences faculty students stood at 6.04 higher than those of power and computer faculty.

Table 3. Post-Hoc Analysis Results of differential level through faculty's Student self-esteem (1 refers to psychology and educational sciences faculty, 2 refers to basic sciences faculty and 3 refers to power and computer faculty)

Groups(I)	Groups(J)	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.
1,00	2,00	2.40	1.92	0.42
	3,00	6.04	2.02	0.00
2,00	1,00	-2.40	1.92	0.42
	3,00	3.64	1.82	0.11
3,00	1,00	-6.048	2.02	0.00
	2,00	-3.64	1.82	0.11

Student t test has been applied to check the difference of self-esteem types (global, academic, body, family and social) for male and female students. Based on results of table 4 there is a significant difference at the level of family self-esteem with $T=-2.12$ for meaningful level of $P<0.05$ among the students. In other components at the meaningful level of $P<0.05$, no meaningful difference is observed among them. Due to higher averages of male students than those of the female ones,

Table 4. Student t test result in difference of self-esteem types for male and female students

variable	Sexuality	N	Mean	SD	t	df	Sig.
Global	boy	141	13.93	3.49	-0.14	368	0.88
	girl	229	13.99	3.76			
Academic	boy	141	11.56	3.74	-0.64	368	0.51
	girl	229	11.81	3.48			
Body	boy	141	12.96	3.08	-1.79	368	0.07

	girl	229	13.53	2.92			
	boy	141	14	4.27			
Family	girl	229	14.83	3.25	-2.12	368	0.03
	boy	141	12.18	3.15			
Social	boy	141	12.18	3.15	-1.90	368	0.05
	girl	229	12.82	3.14			

academic self-esteem with $r=0.29$ and family scale with $r=0.14$ and global scale with $r=0.17$ at the meaningful level of $P<0.05$ has a direct and positive relationship with the educational progress of students after the link of self-esteem type and students educational achievement is being surveyed through Pearson correlation coefficient and stepwise multiple regression analysis based on tables 5 and 6. In other components, no sensible relationship seems visible and only in the first step given, academic self-esteem is predicted to be involved in the equation, elucidating simply 8.8% and in the second step given global scale is predicted to be involved in the equation, elucidating simply 0.11% of changes in the educational achievement.

Table 5. Pearson Correlation Coefficients among Self-esteem and Student Academic Achievement

Variable	Academic achievement		
	N	correlation coefficient	Sig.
Global	370	0.05	0.23
Academic	370	0.29	0.00
Body	370	0.06	0.24
Family	370	0.14	0.00
Social	370	0.08	0.11

Table 6. Stepwise multiple regression to predict academic achievement from self-esteem

Step	variable	R	R ²	F	Sig.	Estimate Error
1	Academic self-esteem	0.29	0.08	35.7	0.00	1.81
2	Global Scale	0.33	0.11	22.74	0.00	1.79

4. Discussion

Regarding the results obtained from the one-way analysis of variance in Table 2, there exists a sensible difference between self-esteem of students in different faculties. And students of psychology and educational sciences have higher score in Total self-esteem and can put forth the reasons for different awareness and insight of these students towards the various issues of life and the value of self-esteem.

Moreover, hypothetical findings of self-esteem differential in male and female students showed that a meaningful difference is seen in the rate of family self-esteem among them. Considering higher averages of boys than those of the girls, conclusion made is that boys stand higher than girls in terms of the variable under investigation. In other areas of self-esteems, no sensible difference is seen between them. Based upon the latest finding of this research, out of 5 domains of self-esteem, the academic and family self-esteem merely have a meaningful relationship with the educational progress of students. A significant difference could not be observed between other areas of self-esteem and academic achievement at the meaningful level of $P<0.05$. Since academic self-esteem is defined in terms of understanding one's value as a student, it could be concluded that by growth in rate of person's academic self-esteem, he/she will endeavor to constitute more and more academic achievements.

These findings corroborates outcome results by Reynolds (1988) who found in his research that academic self-concept is related in a positive and significant manner to grade point average in college students. In addition these are in line with Bottle's study which surveyed the connection between self-esteem and academic achievement and found out this connection as a meaningful one and academically successful people feel more self-esteem in their life. Moreover, it is reinforced by Smith et al., (1998) research on the relationship among locus of control, academic achievement and academic self-esteem which indicated that a positive relationship could be observed between academic self-esteem and academic achievement. The study results also support the findings of Bankston & Zhou (2002); Lockett & Harrell (2003); Schmidt & Padilla (2003); West, Fish, & Stevens (1980); who all cited a positive correlation between self-esteem and academic performance. However, the findings contradict the research of Van Laar (2000) who reported little to no relationship between self-esteem and academic success in African American students.

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